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# Nutrition and healthy eating

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## Taurine is listed as an ingredient in many energy drinks. What is taurine? Is it safe?

Answers from [Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D.](#)

Taurine is an amino acid that supports neurological development and helps regulate the level of water and minerals in the blood. Taurine is also thought to have antioxidant properties.

Taurine is found naturally in meat, fish and breast milk, and it's commonly available as a dietary supplement. Some studies suggest that taurine supplementation may improve athletic performance, which may explain why taurine is used in many energy drinks.

Other studies suggest that taurine combined with caffeine improves mental performance, although this finding remains controversial. And in one study, people with congestive heart failure who took taurine supplements three times a day for two weeks showed improvement in their exercise capacity.

Up to 3,000 milligrams a day of supplemental taurine is generally considered safe. Moderation is important, however. Little is known about the effects of heavy or long-term taurine use.

It's also important to remember that there may be high amounts of other ingredients in energy drinks, such as high amounts of caffeine or sugar. Too much caffeine can increase your heart rate and blood pressure, interrupt your sleep, and cause nervousness and irritability. And added sugar may provide unwanted added calories.

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With

**Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D.**



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